

End Game in the Levant

One-State, Two-State, No-State Solution? Maybe No Solution.

Peter Werbe

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Before anything can be said or written about what has happened in Palestine and Israel since the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attack, recognition must be given to the enormity of the crimes Israel's merciless army has committed against the Palestinian people.

This is being written in late May 2024 and hopefully Israel's genocidal intentions have been stilled by the time it is read.

The assumption herein is that the project of the Israeli ethno-nationalist state, with its own peculiar set of circumstances, is a product of the 500-year trajectory of the failed states of Europe bursting beyond their geography with an attempt to resolve their inherent problems by conquest, genocide, land confiscation, ethnic cleansing, and colonization.

That said, several things are clear: the Palestinian resistance movements with their aspirations for a national homeland and reclamation of land stolen from its people have no intention of ceasing their confrontation with Zionism even after suffering catastrophic loss of life and the utter destruction of Gaza. The Zionist nation, for its part, has as its goal, the creation of a Greater Israel encompassing all of the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

Both sides see their future in a nation, in some form, as stretching from the River to the Sea.

On the face of it, these views seem mutually impossible, but not for those who advocate a single, secular, non-sectarian state that recognizes equal rights of Palestinians as well as Jews who would be former Israelis since an exclusivist Jewish state would cease to exist.

In the short run, as well as perhaps the long, this is not a solution Israel would ever accept since their non-negotiable stance is defense of an ethnically defined state with special privileges for Jews. They are probably correct in fearing that the Jewish population would soon lose a demographic race, becoming a minority in a singular state. But they are probably not correct in fearing that traditional anti-Semitism would arise to threaten Jews as it has historically.

The so-called Two-State Solution, the darling of liberals both in Israel and in the U.S., is equally a chimera, no matter how many other countries recognize a state not yet in formation. After seizing 78 percent of historic Palestine in 1948, the Jewish armies expelled a great proportion of its indigenous population into the Gaza Strip and Lebanon where they existed for decades in refugee camps and a worldwide diaspora.

The logic of David Ben Gurion, founder of the state of Israel, was not to take all of the disputed territory of historic Palestine, which at that time would have included the Jordanian territory west of the River. He realized this would have created an administrative nightmare requiring ruling over a large, resistant Palestinian population.

However, the expansionist wing of Zionism has always eyed the West Bank as an integral part of Israel as Judea and Samaria, but was forestalled until the 1967 Six-Day War in which they triumphed militarily and politically, and began administering the West Bank as an occupied territory. Despite being forced to live under an apartheid

regime brutally administered by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the occupied people maintained constant resistance and frequent intifadas (uprisings).

As both a hedge against the resistance, but also a move towards integrating the West Bank into Israel proper, the Tel Aviv government allowed Jewish settlers with special privileges to colonize the district to the point that today there are over half a million settlers in the West Bank and growing steadily according to a December 2023 report in *The Times of Israel*.

This number makes the idea of a Palestinian state in the West Bank an impossibility and intentionally so. A Palestinian state of three million with a Jewish minority is not seriously considered and really never was regardless of all the talk and conferences.

Such a state would undoubtedly require the reintegration of Jewish settlers into Israel which is not feasible geographically or economically. Besides, the majority of the settlers are religious fanatics who see themselves as the vanguard of the Greater Israel vision. An attempt at a forced exodus of the settlers would most probably ignite a civil war. Plus, Israel's 2018 Nation-State law defines itself as having "an exclusive and inalienable right to all parts of the Land of Israel." End of discussion about a two-state solution.

Anarchists such as sociologist Mohammed Bamyeh propose what may seem like the least possible proposal: a No-State Solution. Its probability is no less realistic than the others given Israeli intransigence and commitment to their current definition of as an ethno-state.

However, Palestinian society and culture remains intact, is highly organized, and exists both in Gaza, the West Bank, and the diaspora without a state. Bamyeh asserts they have what has functioned as the social experience of an organic anarchy without it being identified as such. This might make it possible to work in the context of autonomous groups in cooperation with others, without a centralizing state.

Although probably the majority of Palestinians embrace the idea of statehood, the enduring success of communities such as Rojava and Chiapas help make the no-state solution less general and abstract. Certainly not perfect, but open to anarchistic imaginings.

Israel and its supporters speak of their desire for peace and cite what is known as "the generous offers" that have been put forth for decades which would allow a semblance of a Palestinian state on the West Bank. However, the proposals were never offered with any expectation they would be accepted.

They are part of a never-to-be-fulfilled peace process that is not intended to bring an end to hostilities, but rather to give the illusion that Israel is the reasonable party in the dispute.

There is no chance that the peace Israel desires will be achieved even after the mass slaughter and intentional destruction of Gaza. Resistance is deep-seated and permanent within Palestinian culture and expresses itself through an intricate network of community organizations and a myriad of tactics from non-violence to armed attacks. Overall, its slogan is, "Generation after generation until Palestine is free." In other words, relentless, ceaseless resistance to Israeli domination.

Many on the Israeli right realize this and advocate what secured the Americas for European settlers: genocide. Rabbi Eliyahu Mali, speaking in Jaffa recently, addressed an audience of IDF soldiers. "Do not spare any soul," he advised them, including women and children. Such it is with Jewish biblical doctrine which is replete with massacres of the enemies of the Jews.

Rabbi Mali justifies genocide by noting it is women who create terrorists, but the children as well because, "Today, he is a baby; tomorrow he is a fighter; we will shoot them." Again, grotesquely, the man of god is probably correct. Those who formed the Hamas assault force in the invasion of Israel were very possibly the sons and grandsons of Palestinians who remember one of the 15 Israeli wars against the Gaza Strip. Although there was great shock as this talk went viral, it is exactly what the IDF has done in Gaza, realizing the Palestinian fighters of the future are currently in formation.

Israel has closed the door on every option except what they have currently chosen, and has done so since the origin of the Jewish state. Its image as a progressive country whose only desire is to live in peace with its neighbors and those who are under its control has been shattered.

It has always been a settler state, a warfare state, an apartheid state, but was able to deflect this perception from most of the world. Now, the mask is off and Israel has become a pariah state with only a few Western nations including the U.S. maintaining the pretense of the country being a liberal democracy desiring peace with the

Palestinians and its Arab neighboring countries. If Israel's punitive campaign ends with as much brutality as it is currently displaying at this writing, perhaps even the U.S. ruling class will have had enough of the disruption it causes in world political and economic relations.

The movement of Palestinian solidarity has spread world-wide and encompasses governments as wide-spread as Ireland and South Africa, engendered a youth movement reminiscent of the 1960s, and exposed the crimes committed by a nation whose campaign of vengeance and suppression know no boundaries.

Its ubiquitous symbol is the red, black, white, and green Palestinian flag flown at every demonstration representing a homeland yet to be achieved. There are many admirable and even heroic elements to the resistance of fighting in outnumbered and out-gunned battles, groups which are secular and community based, many that profess non-violence, and ones that possess a spirit of anarchism not enunciated but present, as well as small anarchist formations.

But in the category of careful of what you wish for, countries formed after the withdrawal of colonial powers have a sad and unfortunate history. One need only look at Nelson Mandela and the ANC and then South Africa today run by bureaucrats and kleptocrats. It's not that much different than long standing countries including the U.S., but after all the blood that has been spilled, can't a solution be devised other than another nation state?

No State.

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